

1-1 By: Fraser S.C.R. No. 26
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 12, 2015; March 18, 2015, read
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Veteran Affairs and
1-4 Military Installations; May 8, 2015, reported favorably by the
1-5 following vote: Yeas 7, Nays 0; May 8, 2015, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

| | Yea | Nay | Absent | PNV |
|------|------------------|-----|--------|-----|
| 1-7 | | | | |
| 1-8 | <u>Campbell</u> | X | | |
| 1-9 | <u>Burton</u> | X | | |
| 1-10 | <u>Birdwell</u> | X | | |
| 1-11 | <u>Garcia</u> | X | | |
| 1-12 | <u>Hall</u> | X | | |
| 1-13 | <u>Lucio</u> | X | | |
| 1-14 | <u>Rodríguez</u> | X | | |

1-15 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-16 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established
1-17 to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state
1-18 or federal military forces, and Lieutenant Colonel Ed Dyess, a
1-19 highly decorated aviator and warrior called "the One-Man Scourge of
1-20 the Japanese" during World War II due to his remarkable adaptive
1-21 ability to fight a relentless, ruthless enemy in the Pacific
1-22 Theater as a combat pilot, infantry commander, prisoner of war, and
1-23 guerrilla, would be a fitting recipient of this prestigious award;
1-24 and

1-25 WHEREAS, Born in Albany, Shackelford County, on August 9,
1-26 1916, William Edwin Dyess exhibited natural leadership skills as
1-27 the student body president at Albany High School and as the class
1-28 president and commander of the R.O.T.C. detachment at John Tarleton
1-29 Agricultural College (now Tarleton State University); a
1-30 distinguished graduate of the flight schools at Randolph Field,
1-31 known as "the West Point of the Air," and Kelly Field in San
1-32 Antonio, Dyess was appointed commanding officer of the 21st Pursuit
1-33 Squadron and deployed to the Philippine Islands in 1941, where he
1-34 would become one of the first Americans to engage the enemy in World
1-35 War II; and

1-36 WHEREAS, During the early phase of the Pacific War, First
1-37 Lieutenant Dyess shot down six enemy planes, actions that would
1-38 have classified him as an "ace" if not for the lack of gun cameras
1-39 and the destruction by American forces of military records to
1-40 prevent them from falling into enemy hands; in late January 1942,
1-41 during an emergency shortage of combat aircraft, Dyess demonstrated
1-42 exceptional skill as a marksman and motivator as he led his
1-43 ill-equipped and inexperienced squadron of airmen in infantry
1-44 combat through the jungles of the Bataan Peninsula during the
1-45 "Battle of the Points"; and

1-46 WHEREAS, On February 8, 1942, Captain Dyess volunteered to
1-47 lead America's first amphibious landing of World War II, at
1-48 Agloloma Bay, to root out two enemy battalions that had entrenched
1-49 themselves with orders from Japanese commanding General Masaharu
1-50 Homma to wreak havoc behind the Filipino-American lines; Dyess was
1-51 the first man ashore, selflessly exposing himself to enemy fire
1-52 while engaging enemy positions with a Lewis machine gun and
1-53 motivating his apprehensive 20-man force to join him; amidst
1-54 exploding bombs, Dyess and his party secured the beachhead using
1-55 automatic weapons and hand grenades and eliminated approximately 75
1-56 heavily armed, elite Japanese troops who had fortified themselves
1-57 in caves; the failure of General Homma's operation allowed American
1-58 forces in the Philippines to hold out a few months longer, trapping
1-59 enemy resources and giving America time to mobilize in the wake of
1-60 the attack on Pearl Harbor; and

1-61 WHEREAS, On March 2, 1942, Dyess led nine pilots flying five

2-1 battered warplanes in a daring raid on the enemy supply depot at
2-2 Subic Bay, Luzon; flying a Curtiss P-40 Warhawk rigged to carry
2-3 500-pound bombs, Dyess braved heavy antiaircraft fire, engaged an
2-4 enemy cruiser, and ultimately destroyed one 12,000-ton transport,
2-5 one 6,000-ton vessel, at least two 100-ton motor launches, and a
2-6 handful of barges and lighters; in order to save face, Radio Tokyo
2-7 reported that 54 bombers and swarms of fighter planes had been
2-8 responsible for the attack; Dyess was presented with the
2-9 Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military
2-10 decoration that can be awarded, for the extraordinary heroism that
2-11 he displayed on this occasion; and

2-12 WHEREAS, Although many officers began to shirk their duties
2-13 and pull rank as the military situation deteriorated, Dyess worked
2-14 hard to boost the morale of his men, cleaning cockpits and flying
2-15 countless reconnaissance, resupply, and evacuation missions; he
2-16 sometimes flew up to 1,400 miles through enemy skies to bring back
2-17 desperately needed medicines and telegrams for his men; and

2-18 WHEREAS, Dyess refused multiple opportunities to leave the
2-19 doomed Bataan Peninsula and endeavored to ensure others were
2-20 evacuated before him; Dyess personally supervised the boarding of
2-21 evacuees on the last flyable aircraft on Bataan; the final seat was
2-22 reserved for Dyess himself, but at the last second he ordered a
2-23 friend onto the plane in his stead; and

2-24 WHEREAS, After the surrender of 75,000 American and Filipino
2-25 troops on Bataan on April 9, 1942, Dyess endured the most horrific
2-26 war crime in the history of the United States, the Bataan Death
2-27 March; Dyess watched as prisoners of war were denied water and
2-28 medical care, beaten, beheaded, whipped, shot, buried alive, run
2-29 over by tanks, and used for bayonet practice; due to his height,
2-30 fair complexion, and status as an officer, Dyess was singled out for
2-31 mistreatment and suffered through savage beatings; despite this,
2-32 Dyess shepherded his men forward, helped the wounded, and noted the
2-33 horrors taking place around him so that he could describe them in a
2-34 firsthand account; for the next six months, Dyess endured
2-35 starvation, disease, interrogation, and torture in two squalid
2-36 prison camps on Luzon, where he continued to encourage and aid his
2-37 fellow prisoners, smuggling food and medicine to those in need; and

2-38 WHEREAS, In November 1942, Captain Dyess arrived at the Davao
2-39 Penal Colony, known as "Dapecol," a reportedly escape-proof prison
2-40 plantation where 2,000 American prisoners of war were being forced
2-41 to work as slave laborers; while at Dapecol, Dyess co-organized a
2-42 team of United States military personnel to execute the only
2-43 large-scale prison break of prisoners of war in the Pacific War;
2-44 Dyess volunteered for the dangerous task of transporting the escape
2-45 party's gear on a bull cart past multiple guard checkpoints; on
2-46 April 4, 1943, the "Davao Dozen," 10 American prisoners of war and
2-47 two Filipino convicts, made their amazing escape through a deep,
2-48 crocodile-infested swamp; after eluding search parties, Dyess
2-49 fought alongside Filipino guerrilla forces behind enemy lines
2-50 before evacuating to Australia in July 1943; he received a
2-51 promotion to major and was personally presented with his second
2-52 Distinguished Service Cross, in the form of a Bronze Oak Leaf
2-53 Cluster, by General MacArthur on July 30, 1943; and

2-54 WHEREAS, Dyess would have enjoyed a hero's welcome had his
2-55 superiors not consigned him to a military hospital in the mountains
2-56 of West Virginia, where he was subjected to secret debriefings by
2-57 government officials; he was sequestered there because the
2-58 government feared that his story, if released to the public, would
2-59 jeopardize the "Europe First" strategic policy and Pacific prisoner
2-60 of war relief efforts of the Allies; despite suffering from
2-61 depression and severe post-traumatic stress disorder, Dyess was
2-62 determined to make his account of the Bataan Death March and other
2-63 atrocities known to the public, and he entered into a publishing
2-64 agreement with the *Chicago Tribune*; his epic story, trumpeted by
2-65 the War Department as "The Greatest Story of the War in the
2-66 Pacific," was eventually released on January 28, 1944, skillfully
2-67 timed to harness the full fury of America's anger; stagnant war bond
2-68 sales and service enlistment numbers soared as Dyess's revelations
2-69 forced America out of a mid-war complacency; and

3-1 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Dyess never lived to see his
3-2 remarkable story take hold of America; during a routine flight over
3-3 Los Angeles on December 22, 1943, his P-38 Lightning began to have
3-4 engine trouble; rather than bailing out and letting his plane
3-5 careen into a crowded residential area, Dyess attempted an
3-6 emergency city street landing, but he pulled up at the last moment
3-7 to avoid hitting a motorist who had strayed into his path; while
3-8 attempting to guide his crippled aircraft onto a vacant lot, he
3-9 struck a church and was killed instantly when his plane crashed;
3-10 Dyess was awarded the Soldier's Medal posthumously in recognition
3-11 of a heroic act not involving an armed enemy; Dyess's family
3-12 resisted the public's clamor for his interment at Arlington
3-13 National Cemetery and instead buried him in his beloved home state
3-14 in the Albany Cemetery; to this day, the only public recognition of
3-15 Dyess and his incredible life was the renaming of Abilene Air Force
3-16 Base to Dyess Air Force Base in 1956; and

3-17 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Ed Dyess risked his life
3-18 repeatedly in defense of his country, and he put the welfare of his
3-19 fellow prisoners of war ahead of his own; he revealed to the
3-20 American people a vital aspect of the war, and he ultimately
3-21 sacrificed his own life to save the life of another; he is most
3-22 assuredly deserving of this state's supreme military award; now,
3-23 therefore, be it

3-24 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
3-25 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to award the Texas
3-26 Legislative Medal of Honor posthumously to Lieutenant Colonel Ed
3-27 Dyess in recognition of his extraordinary military service and
3-28 remarkable succession of valorous acts in World War II.

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